

## Message Text

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61

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 NEA-10 OIC-04 IO-13 USIE-00

NSCE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 INRE-00

SSO-00 DRC-01 OMB-01 ACDA-19 DPW-01 /142 W

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O 050255Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1613

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MANILA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 4895

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: SEATO XC VS AS

SUBJ: SEATO: GVN PARTICIPATION IN SEATO COUNCIL MEETING

REF: A) SAIGON 15840; B) CANBERRA 4880; C) STATE 169869

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: REFTELS A AND B ON GVN ATTENDANCE AS OBSERVER AT SEATO COUNCIL MEETING CROSSED WITHIN MINUTES OF EACH OTHER. SINCE GOA HAS TAKEN CLEAR POSITION AGAINST GVN OBSERVER, I BELIEVE EXTENSION OF ORDINARY INVITATION TO GVN MIGHT LEAD AUSTRALIANS TO DECIDE NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN SEATO COUNCIL MEETING OR, AT LEAST, WOULD BE LIKELY TO PROVOKE DIVISIVE RHUBARB AT COUNCIL MEETING WHICH NOT IN OUR INTEREST. I SUGGEST GVN MIGHT BE INVITED TO A REVIEW OF SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA BUT NOT RPT NOT TO SEATO COUNCIL AS A WHOLE. THIS COUNCIL MEETING WILL CONSIDER FUTURE OF SEATO AS AN ORGANIZATION, A SUBJECT LOGICALLY FOR MEMBERS ONLY. END SUMMARY.

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2. REF A AND B CROSSED WITHIN A FEW MINUTES OF EACH

OTHER. I TRUST THAT AMBASSADOR MARTIN WILL NOT RPT NOT INFORM ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER DUC OF INVITATION (PARA 2, REF A) UNTIL WE HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO SORT THIS ISSUE OUT IN MANNER WHICH BEST SERVES LONGER RANGE U.S. INTERESTS IN SEATO, AUSTRALASIA AND ASIA.

3. PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM HAS DECIDED THAT AUSTRALIA COULD NOT AGREE TO ATTENDANCE OF GVN REPRESENTATIVES AS OBSERVER AT UPCOMING SEATO COUNCIL MEETING. WHITLAM HAS USED ESSENTIALLY WEAK ARGUMENT (REF B), BUT HE HAS TAKEN A FIRM POSITION. WE ARE AWARE FROM BLAKENEY'S STATEMENTS TO US THAT U.S. ARGUMENTS IN REF C WERE FULLY PRESENTED TO WHITLAM. SINCE BECOMING PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM HAS MADE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS IN ACCEPTING SEATO AS PART OF POLITICAL LANDSCAPE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, BUT WE WOULD STILL HAVE TO CONCLUDE THAT DOUBT REMAINS ABOUT CONTINUED AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION IN SEATO.

4. SEATO IS MOST UNPOPULAR AMONG MODERATES AS WELL AS LEFT WING OF AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY. WHITLAM'S ASSERTION OF CONTINUED GOA ALLEGIANCE TO SEATO IN CONNECTION WITH HIS WASHINGTON VISIT MADE HIM VERY FEW POLITICAL FRIENDS AT HOME WITHIN HIS OWN PARTY. EXTENSION OF INVITATION TO GVN OBSERVER UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS MIGHT LEAD WHITLAM TO DECIDE NOT RPT NOT TO SEND AUSTRALIAN REP TO SEATO COUNCIL MEETING. IT WOULD AT LEAST ENSURE A DIVISIVE RHUBARB AT THE MEETING AND JEOPARDIZE THE AFFIRMATION OF A REMODELLED SEATO WHICH WE SEEK.

5. WE GATHER FROM WELLINGTON REPORTING THAT PRIME MINISTER KIRK IS AS PERSONALLY ENGAGED IN THIS ISSUE AS WHITLAM.

6. I WONDER IF FOLLOWING SOLUTION MIGHT TAKE CARE OF PROBLEM. IN CONVERSATION WITH ME AUG 30 WILLIAM PRITCHETT, SENIOR ASSISTANT TO AUSTRALIAN MINISTER FOR DEFENSE LANCE BARNARD, FAIRLY CLEARLY INDICATED HIS IMPRESSION THAT WHITLAM DECISION ON AGREEING TO GVN INVITATION WOULD BE NEGATIVE. PRITCHETT SUGGESTED WE COULD USE ARGUMENT WITH GVN THAT THIS SEATO COUNCIL

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SESSION IS UNLIKE OTHERS, IN THAT MAJOR FOCUS IS ON REVIEW OF ORGANIZATION AND RE-DIRECTION OF ITS ACTIVITIES. SUCH A REVIEW IS LOGICALLY FOR MEMBERS OF SEATO, AS DISTINGUISHED FROM OBSERVERS, AND NORMAL GVN ATTENDANCE THIS YEAR IS NOT RPT NOT APPROPRIATE. I WOULD PROPOSE WE BUILD ON BARNARD'S SUGGESTION AS FOLLOWS. AT SOME POINT IN PROCEEDINGS, I ASSUME MEMBERS WILL WANT TO UNDERTAKE GENERAL SURVEY OF SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, INCLUDING

INDO-CHINA, A MATTER IN WHICH GVN IS, OF COURSE, VITALLY  
INTERESTED. GVN OBSERVER MIGHT BE INVITED TO ATTEND  
SUCH SURVEY OF SITUATION, ON UNDERSTANDING THAT REMAINDER  
OF SEATO COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS WOULD BE FOR MEMBERS ONLY.  
BEFORE SUCH AN INVITATION IS EXTENDED, I WOULD NEED TO  
EXPLORE GROUND WITH WHITLAM.  
GREEN

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** OPPOSITION TO ADMISSION, MEETING OBSERVERS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 05 SEP 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
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**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** smithrj  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
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**TAGS:** AORG, XC, VS, AS, SEATO  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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